



Utilizing Self-Compassion While Improving Wellness

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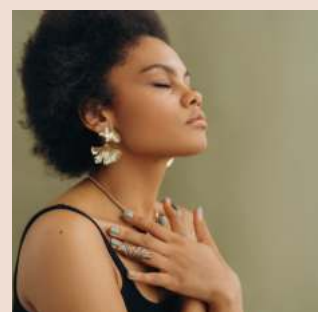
Utilizing Self-Compassion While Improving Wellness

Terms like "wellness" and "health" don't always induce happy or hopeful feelings for everyone, and that's okay. Health and wellness may be challenging for some individuals, and while they desire both, it isn't always an easy process. Most people know what they should do for self-improvement, but following through can be evasive. We may also compare ourselves to others and think we should be healthier or more capable, leaving us in an endless cycle of disappointment. For those with long-term concerns or severe health conditions, wellness may seem impossible or like continuously climbing up a metaphorical hill.

The good news is that there are ways to support ourselves mentally and emotionally when trying to improve or accept our health status. In this article, we will focus on three ways to understand and promote self-compassion in your daily life, especially while making strides to improve your health. We hope they inspire you to continue your wellness journey and help you discover even more tools to help you holistically address your health.

1. Self-Compassion

"Love the client where they're at" is one of the philosophies we teach at Trinity. Whether you're working with a practitioner or making improvements on your own, you can extend this same idea to yourself through a practice known as self-compassion. Dr. Kristin Neff, who is considered the pioneer of this field of study, says, "Instead of mercilessly judging and criticizing yourself for various inadequacies or shortcomings, self-compassion means you are kind and understanding when confronted with personal failings – after all, whoever said you were supposed to be perfect?"





She determined that there are three elements of self-compassion:

1. SELF-KINDNESS VS. SELF-JUDGEMENT
2. COMMON HUMANITY VS. ISOLATION
3. MINDFULNESS VS. OVER-IDENTIFICATION

Neff puts these three elements into actionable steps. To practice self-compassion, she suggests first providing yourself with a gentle, comforting touch, such as placing your hands on your heart or holding your hand. Then, tell yourself what you might say to a friend. For example, "I know this is difficult, but I am here for you." To complement the second element of self-compassion, you can also acknowledge that many people have gone through this same thing, and you're not alone. What you're going through is a part of being human. Lastly, you can mindfully become aware of your thoughts and feelings, allowing them to exist without trying to ignore or suppress them while also not becoming entrenched or "over-identified" with them. Visit self-compassion.org/videos/ or watch her TED Talk to learn more about these three elements.

Dr. Neff also has an inspiring quote on her website about self-compassion and how it relates to our shared humanity. This message provides a helpful way to address yourself as you continue on your wellness journey:

"You may try to change in ways that allow you to be more healthy and happy, but this is done because you care about yourself, not because you are worthless or unacceptable as you are. Perhaps most importantly, having compassion for yourself means that you honor and accept your humanness."

"To complement the second element of self-compassion, you can also acknowledge that many people have gone through this same thing, and you're not alone. What you're going through is a part of being human."



2. Christianity and Self-Compassion

Christians can also turn to the bible and their faith to learn more about self-compassion. Corine Williams, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, discusses self-compassion in her article on Therapy for Christians. Williams points out that Jesus's teachings and the example he set were steeped in the wisdom of compassion for ourselves and others, demonstrated in the lesson, "Love your neighbor as yourself." She also highlights a biblical passage that urges us to be compassionate toward ourselves that appears in Colossians. "As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience." – Colossians 3:12

Furthermore, she explains that "As a Christian, the best way to practice self-compassion is to see yourself through God's eyes. He never attaches what you did to who you are. God saw every move you have ever made and every mistake you've ever committed and loves you despite it all. He loves you because He created you and He knows you."

3. Bach Flowers and Self-Compassion

The 38 Bach flower essences discovered by Dr. Edward Bach are homeopathic-like tinctures that can help support your emotions and mental state. Some Bach flowers that could be beneficial during self-compassion practice are Agrimony, Beech, Crab Apple, Gentian, Impatiens, Larch, Pine, Rock Water, and Willow. Another suggestion is Bach flower essence Holly. In an article written by Patricia Kaminski, she explains that Holly encourages the capacity to love by developing what Dr. Bach called "the great inner self." She goes on to quote Dr. Bach to show how he viewed Holly, "The ultimate conquest of all will be through love and gentleness, and when we have sufficiently developed these two qualities, nothing will be able to assail us, since we shall ever have compassion and not offer resistance." If you find that there is a certain aspect of self-compassion or a part of your belief system that is blocking you from experiencing self-compassion, consider working with a Certified Flower Essence Specialist to learn which flower essences may be best for you based on your personality and the emotions and thoughts you're experiencing.

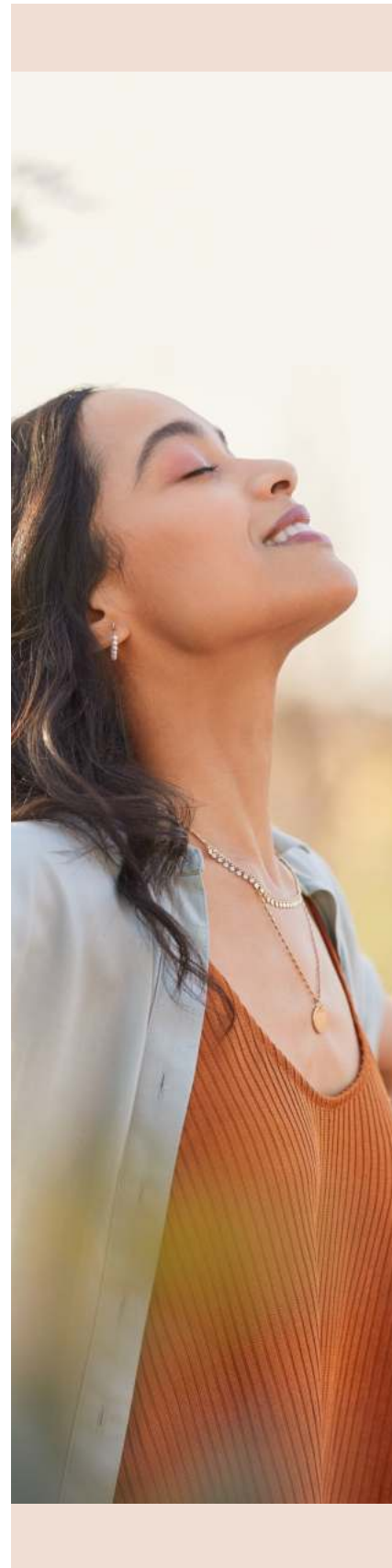
Conclusion

Improving your health and wellness isn't a journey you must walk alone. With help from your self-compassion practice, Bach flower essences, support from loved ones, and God or a higher power, your road to wellness may become easier and even more enjoyable. You may also grow and change in ways you never expected or intended.

Never hesitate to bring on extra support to meet your goals. As believers in holistic wellness, we understand how the mind, body, and spirit work in tandem to influence well-being, and we advocate for qualified experts in any of these areas when needed.

For example, consider seeking assistance from your healthcare provider, a mental wellness professional, a natural health practitioner, or all three! This is especially true if you have a preexisting condition, take medications, or are struggling with your mental and emotional health. It's also important to consult with your healthcare provider to ensure any changes in your daily habits are safe for you.

If you'd like to learn more about flower essences and their uses, consider enrolling in the Certified Natural Health Professional program or the Certified Flower Essence Specialist program. Call 800-428-0408, option 2, to speak to an Enrollment Specialist or visit our website at trinityschool.org/programs/list to learn more and enroll.



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